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WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

Flowers — tears— flowers — lamentation — a sober, mournful nation—reverence—appreciation; but it was too late. The man lay cold and lifeless in the metallic casket. He had died, bearing upon his mind the scorn and ridicule of his own people. Thousands of his life-time scoffers now honored him; but Woodrow Wilson was gone.

A little more than half a century ago, twenty-five million people bowed their heads in solemn tribute to the man whom they had ridiculed; whom they had again and again defeated in his efforts to do good for mankind. But the tribute was too late; Abraham Lincoln was a martyr.

Nearly four centuries ago, hundreds honored one who had a definite vision of truth, but it was too late; for, rejected by his own people, died Martin Luther.

Nearly two thousand years ago, thousands were stricken with stinging remorse for their dastardly deed of torture—but it was too late. They had crucified their own Master and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is the traditional fallacy of the world to throw the bouquet when it is too late. Shall this fallacy continue to obtain? Modern ethics does not encourage it. It is both a privilege and duty to honor the living as well as the dead.

Friends, we are fortunate in having, not only the memory of true statesmen of the past; but we are also blessed in having true statesmen in the present. It is our imper-

ative opportunity to appreciate these great men while they live; we must not tarry until it is too late. Appreciation assures a progressive, modest man that his life is a great service to his generation while he is still living; it assures him that his name and the fruits of his labors will remain immortal when he is gone.

Among the many living statesmen, there are, no doubt, several who stand above the average. Tonight I wish to speak to you about only one of these—one who has spent, most venerably, the majority of his days upon earth; one who has reached the peak of his service to the world. It is my definite aim to create in you an attitude of respect and admiration for the great living American statesman, William Jennings Bryan.

The predominant virtues that characterize the true statesman are well defined. They fall easily into two groups: those that pertain to the man himself; and those that show him in his relation to others. In the first group, we think of a statesman as necessarily having a healthy body and a strong mind. Also, he must have honesty, sincerity, culture, and self-respect. Again, he must have high ideals, strong convictions, courage to forward his convictions, and perseverance in them under repeated defeat. In the second group of virtues are leadership, magnanimity, obedience to law and duty, respect for others, and finally, the keen diplomacy to extend idealism to practical affairs.

Let us compare the virtues of the true statesman with those of William Jennings Bryan. In the subjective group, the first two requisites are a healthy body and a strong mind. Friends, our great leader of the plain people has a superb mind housed in a strong body. He is an expert hunter and a good horseman. He has an alert mind and a calm, "anti-nervous" body. His mental aptitude is suggested by his degrees: A. B., A. M., LL. B., and three LL. D.'s. In the words of Henry W. Ruoff, "There is not a saner or more wholesome personality in the world than Mr. Bryan.

He is evenly developed and evenly balanced. He loves books better than theaters, the fields better than cities, and he loves men better than all."

The subsequent requisites under the first group are honesty, sincerity, culture, and self-respect. Does Bryan possess honesty, sincerity, culture, and self-respect? The answer is obvious. In his ardent hatred for the recent war, Bryan was so honest that he could not conscientiously sign the war note to Germany, and he therefore resigned his position as Secretary of State. Bryan also is sincere. He enjoys giving his frank, straight-forward opinions, devoid of all glamour and magniloquence. Furthermore, Bryan is cultured; he is courteous, but not affected. He is pleasant and agreeable, but in no way artificial. Again, Mr. Bryan has self-respect. He is clean in his daily life. It would be just as absurd to imagine William Jennings Bryan smoking, drinking, dancing, or gambling as it would be to imagine Charles M. Sheldon doing the same things.

Bryan built for himself a strong character and dedicated its power to the needs of his country. He has stood for and has lived for peace and democracy. His ambitions are not to glorify himself, but to serve others. Besides having high ideals, a statesman must have strong convictions and the courage to forward them. These abilities Bryan admirably has. He has something to say that ought to be said, and he knows how to say it. In his courageous desire to be understood, he loves to quote from the universally familiar book, the Bible. Lastly, in reference to the subjective virtues of a statesman, Mr. Bryan has perseverance in his convictions under repeated defeat. In his three defeats for the presidency, he was not discouraged. He suffered defeat like a real man—not like a whipped dog. No man ever heard Bryan whimper. He will cling tenaciously to his avowed purpose regardless of the cost.

In his objective attributes Bryan has the virtue of leadership; he is indisputably the supreme political leader

of democracy. Moreover, he has magnanimity. Bryan has a super-electro-magnetism, which compels civilization to listen to him; and then he literally pours into their open minds their own, unformulated thought, feelings, and desires. His sweet sarcasm and sparkling wit dispel all thoughts of fatigue in his hearers. His powerful personality arouses spontaneous and continuous enthusiasm and applause. He holds the record of the world for applause. At one time, when his name was mentioned, the people cheered for eighty-eight minutes.

Again, Bryan is obedient to law and duty. As a lawyer, he knows the laws of the land, and, because of his honesty, obeys them. In him is constantly present a feeling of duty. Moreover, Bryan, as a true statesman, respects others. He is always glad to welcome a hearty hand-shake. Those whom he meets note at once that Bryan admirably lacks the veneer and repulsiveness so often found in men whom we call gentlemen. It is such an attitude only, that will win for a statesman the respct that is true.

Finally, a statesman must extend idealism to practical affairs, and Bryan, a true statesman, has done so. For example: Bryan hates gambling, and it is this idealistic hatred that underlies his opposition to private monopoly. Again, Bryan longs for a stronger, purer manhood in America; it was this longing that prompted his victorious fight for prohibition. The great orator is not merely theoretical; he is practical—he is a constructive statesman.

William Jennings Bryan, then, obviously, has all the virtues of the ordinary statesman; but he is greater; he has that which the ordinary statesman often lacks; he has a firm foundation for his virtues—Christianity. He professes to be a Christian and lives as one. Bryan has repeatedly testified that the source of whatever good he has been able to accomplish has been Christianity. He puts first things first: God before man, and men before himself. Bryan's religious, ethical, and moral standards are high.

He considers that his greatest joy in life is helping someone spiritually.

Furthermore, Bryan is dignified—yet humble; he is progressive—yet conservative; he is self-asserting—yet broadminded; he is a politician—yet honest; he is jolly—yet serious; he is not emotional—yet magnetic. He does not dictate to the world—he argues and appeals to the conscience and reason of the people. He is a true representative of the four-fold life; he is physically strong; mentally sound; socially exceptional; and spiritually pure.

The value of Bryan's life to the United States and to the world is inestimably great. He has caused Christianity to purify politics. He has proved to the world that religion and politics can go and should go hand in hand. Bryan is liquor's fiercest enemy. If the United States would suddenly consider legislation for light beer and wine, I feel certain that Bryan would speak until the entire country would resound with his fervent oratory, and John Barleycorn's advocates would shrink away in shame, as did Shylock from the Venetian court room. Bryan labored incessantly for temperance in the United States; he lived to see enacted an amendment to the Constitution which prohibits the manufacture and use of alcoholic beverages; and today stands as a private citizen, guarding and outliving the deadly crave for alcohol in the United States. When at home in Miami, Florida, over one thousand tourists of all denominations and of all creeds have Bryan, one of the best students and instructors of the Bible in the world, as their Sunday School teacher.

Bryan's success was made by honest, effective efforts to do good for his country—not by the glories of high offices. Out of thirty-four years of his active life, he held offices only six years and three months. He was successively: congressman, colonel in the army, and finally, secretary of state in the cabinet of Woodrow Wilson for twenty-seven months. While he was secretary of state, he

negotiated thirty treaties with governments representing three-fourths of the world's population, and providing for investigation of all disputes.

Bryan has been connected with more reforms and has contributed more to them than any other statesman. Some of the most important are: popular election of senators; bank guarantee; tariff laws; protection of laborers; child labor; anti-trust laws; federal reserve bank; farmer's loan bank; peace treaties; income tax; publicity to campaign funds; woman's suffrage, and prohibition.

Friends, it is preposterous for Americans to ridicule a man because of his failures, especially if he is living for America. In his efforts for public office, Abraham Lincoln was defeated six times. If we were to judge a man by his defeats, Lincoln would today be an outcast in the opinion of America—Jesus Christ would be forgotten by the people of the world. Yes, Bryan was defeated in three trials for the presidency—he admits these defeats, and makes no apologies for them; and he need not do so. Time has proved that Bryan was misunderstood. The people, blinded by a few petty policies of the great commoner, failed to see his fundamental issue—true democracy. Bryan expresses this failure to comprehend a true purpose, in the following sad but fervent words:

"They call a man a statesman whose ear is tuned to hear the slightest pulsations of a pocket-book, and denounce as a demagogue anyone who dares listen to the heart beat of humanity."

Yes, Mr. Bryan is a leader of men; he is a Christian leader; and his life has been of inestimable value to America. So, therefore, let true American citizens now and hereafter appreciate William Jennings Bryan. Let them respect that name which designates America's greatest commoner, the honest citizen, the silver tongued orator, the magnetic politician, the champion of temperance, the true-hearted evangelist, the model statesman, the Ideal American.